

September 25, 2006

PETITION CIRCULATORS CHARGED

BISMARCK – Six people who collected signatures to place a child custody and support initiated measure on the ballot for the November general election have been charged with filing false statements, said Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem.

The child custody and support initiated measure was filed with the Secretary of State's office on August 8, 2006, by a group of petitioners led by Mitchell Sanderson of Grand Forks. The Secretary of State's initial review of the petition signatures raised suspicions of election fraud. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation conducted an investigation which uncovered several violations, resulting in the criminal complaints being issued.

Timothy W. Anderson of Grand Forks and Jennifer L. Delorme, Milton Johnson, Lauren Clark, Melissa M. Lau, and Crystal Johnson of Fargo are alleged to have filed a false statement, a Class A Misdemeanor. The criminal complaints allege that each of the six signed an affidavit stating they witnessed all the signatures and all signatures on the petitions were genuine. However, the investigation found that the statements were not correct, and some individuals whose signatures appeared on the petitions had not, in fact, signed them.

Anderson is scheduled to appear in Grand Forks District Court on October 23, 2006; the others are to appear in Cass County District Court on October 13, 2006. The maximum penalty for a Class A misdemeanor is one year's imprisonment, a fine of two thousand dollars, or both.

Crystal Johnson, Jennifer Delorme and Milton Johnson all provided the same apartment at 3520 28th Street SW, Fargo as their residence; Lauren Clark lives at 2620 14th Street South, Fargo in apartment 14A, while Melissa Lau resides in apartment #13 of the same building. Timothy Anderson lives at 1616 12th Avenue South, Grand Forks.